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Ora pro nobis; or, Tristram's friends

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ORA PRO NOBIS;

OR,

TRISTRAM'S FRIENDS.

A Story for Children.

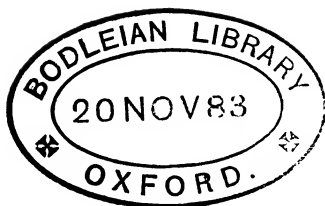
BY

REV. FRANCIS DREW.



R. WASHBOURNE,
18 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.
1883.

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R. WASHBOURNE, 18 PATERNOSTER ROW,
LONDON.

ORA PRO NOBIS;

OR,

TRISTRAM'S FRIENDS.

CHAPTER I.

It was midwinter forty years ago.

All day long the storm had been rising, and they said it would be wild weather far along the coast. The sun had risen watery and pale, and after trying to shine feebly for an hour or two was quenched in the banks of sea-fog that came rolling in to land. Even then there was a strong chill breeze that swept in gusts along the shore, and, turning inland, rushed up the village street, clattering the loose shutters of the fishermen's cottages and making the signboard of the old inn creak and groan as it swayed to and fro on its rusty bar.

No one cared to stir abroad, and the fishing boats were drawn high up on the shingle of the little bay, and their nets were spread out in the wind to dry.

In the cottages they piled upon the fire great logs of driftwood — salvage of past wrecks — broken bits of mast and decking. And the fishermen sat beside them on the rough hearths

smoking and mending nets or lines, with their sons, chatting and talking over famous storms in years gone by—storms such as they prophesied this would be to-night. Many, too, as the day wore on, strolled up the empty street and turned into the old tavern I have spoken of, where they joined the gradually widening circle around its hospitable hearth, and listened or said their say while their mates told of the shipwrecks that had been within their ken—aye, and in their fathers' and grandfathers' time—upon that wild and dangerous coast. It was cosy enough in there, where the logs blazed and crackled, and the pans and kettles simmered in the heat, while out of doors the wind tore up in sudden sobs and gusts, and the sea-fog was driven on before it. The very creaking and groaning of the rickety signboard sounded comfortable to those within, and helped to make them more at ease.

It was an odd sign for an inn, too, for, faded and weather-worn as it was, one could still see that the dim figure, blistered with summer sun and cracked with winter frost, was meant to represent some monk or anchoret, though what he was about, or in what scene the artist had located him, one could no longer tell. This was St. Meloc, and for three hundred years—and, for all I know, twice as long—this had been St. Meloc's Inn.

Everything in the bay was St. Meloc's, beginning with the bay itself. The grim black headland, shutting in the little harbour to the east, was called St. Meloc's Point, and the church—a queer quaint nave without choir or aisle, built of rubble, and dating from Saxon times—was dedi-

cated to the saint. This last stood at the bottom of the village street close to the sea, which at great tides had often risen up to the wall whereby its tiny churchyard was shut in. But neither church nor yard had ever been flooded by any storm or tide; and beside the former there rose up—a hundred feet and more—a straight wall of granite rock that sheltered it from many a wild eastern gale. This was St. Meloc's wall, and on its flat top—some hundred yards across—stood the rectory, a long, low building of grey stone, more like a monastery than a private house; and also a belfry that was called St. Meloc's Tower. The church below had neither spire nor tower, and the bells were never rung for service, but only when there was a dreadful storm at sea.

At the west end of the church the outer wall looked raw, and clean, and no ivy or creeping plant would grow there; and the tower itself likewise, on one side and up to a certain height—which was that of the church roof—was just as raw-looking, and free from moss, or lichen, or weather-stain. It was as though church and tower had stood together and had been broken asunder—as the fisher-folk believed they had.

Who was St. Meloc?*

You shall hear in time. Meanwhile I want to tell you who the rector of St. Meloc's was. I have told you how his home stood, lonely and bleak, high up on St. Meloc's wall, where the sea-fogs drove in from the tumbling waste of waters that lay desolate far beneath; all around its lichen-rusted walls the winds moaned and whispered, and the jackdaws in the belfry chattered and blustered in their gusty home.

* The legend of the saint given later is purely fiction.

Here, high up over the fishing village and the dreary sea, the rector of St. Meloc's lived alone. His wife was dead, and he had neither mother nor sister to bear him company or cheer his loneliness. Perhaps he was not lonely, certainly he never complained of it or invited anyone to come to the rectory, and I think his old housekeeper had more cause to grumble than Mr. Wolfe. Four years ago he had come to St. Meloc's, bringing with him a young wife whose joyous voice and happy laughter roused the echoes of the old home pleasantly. But she had only lived to bring into this world a tiny daughter, who opened her blue eyes to find herself motherless when she needed a mother most. Sitting up in her bed, the girl-mother gazed out to sea where far away a little fleet of fishing-smacks bowed and danced in the soft breeze, where the waves glittered in the red and gold of sunset, and then, clasping her weak hands to pray, had died.

Down below in the churchyard they laid her, where all day long you could hear the waves sighing and whispering on the shore, and the parched grass was full of sand, blown in the blustering September gales, and many sea-pinks flowered, and all was very quaint and calm and still.

And up alone in the old rectory Mr. Wolfe lived and kept a brave face to the world, read and wrote, and brooded, and went his way alone. The village folk and the inhabitants of the few scattered cottages along the coast liked him well enough.

A parish priest they never dreamed of thinking him, and so were not scandalized to see he did

not hold himself as one. Once on a Sunday he preached, and read the prayers the former rectors had always read before him, and in the summer he gave a second service in the evening too. He read well, and the people supposed he preached well, as most likely indeed he did. Once a month he had a collection after service, and half that money was given to the poor; given most judiciously, always to those who had the greatest claim or need. In the month of October he yearly distributed blankets to those who had not received that bounty for some years, and three times in every winter he gave each widow in his parish a supply of coals.

If anyone was ill seriously or for a considerable time, he called upon the sick man, would talk over his disorder, and, if asked to do so, would even read a chapter of the Bible and a portion of the Book of Common Prayer.

He had a school in his parish which he visited once a week; he baptized the children brought to him for that purpose on the first Sunday in each month—supposing that any children had been born in that time, which of course did not always happen; he married the young couples, and buried the dead, and all this he did decently, without hurry or impatience.

So the people respected him; sometimes asked his advice and, sometimes even followed it; looked up to him as an honest, straightforward gentleman who did his duty and was glad to see them do theirs; and without feeling any warmth of affection for their rector, liked him in a way, just in the way, perhaps, he desired that they should.

Very likely there were some who round the fire of St. Meloc's Inn thought it 'a pity rector lived so close like, and kept the rectory so dull;' but such criticisms were always silenced by the remark that 'any way rector never interfered.' He was a silent man, but not surly, and the village folk always seemed glad to meet him and get his greeting, or answer his few inquiries as to health or luck.

CHAPTER II.

THE storm waxed as day waned; the threatening and stormy morning had been but the usher to a wilder and more tempestuous afternoon; and as the latter's dreary twilight deepened into dusk, the evening settled in fierce and terrible. Drenching floods of rain were driven in sudden gusts by squalls that howled and shrieked as though to taunt the sullen waves, that heaved and tumbled angrily, and goad them into madder fury. Then would come a lull, if lull that could be called which did but let the passion of the waters be heard above that of the winds for a few minutes at a time; then one could hear the long swell of the breakers on the Devil's Bends, a string of grim black rocks that ran across three-fourths of the little harbour's mouth; and from far along the coast there came the boom of mighty billows bursting in hollow caves, and the hissing of the foam upon the sands; and now and then a gull's weird shriek or the solemn knell from St. Meloc's tower, where lights gleamed and the ringers were keeping watch.

Standing out from the shore on the side of the

bay opposite to St. Meloc's Point, were five rocks of almost equal height and alike in shape—tall and with a certain rude likeness to black-robed men; these were called the Black Monks, and on that one which stood farthest out to sea was perched a lighthouse whence now a broad lane of yellow light fell on the heaving waters. The little bay was full of fisher-folk, men and women and lads, and all were straining their eyes seaward and listening eagerly, for some one had just come running down from St. Meloc's Tower with a tale that they had heard a distress-gun out at sea.

While they were standing silent or only speaking in low excited whispers, the rector appeared in their midst.

'What is this they are saying?' he asked. 'Did any of you down in the bay hear this?'

'No, sir,' a man answered; 'but they heard it right plain up on the wall.'

'I heard nothing,' said Mr. Wolfe; 'but then I was indoors, and you say it was a good way out.'

'Ay, sir, it was that—almost drowned in the noise of the storm.'

All now fell again into silence, and strained their ears for any repetition of the sound.'

'Hark,' cried Mr. Wolfe, after they had been listening there some minutes; 'I think I hear a gun.'

'And so I did,' cried a lad who was clinging to the gunwale of a boat and facing out towards the lighthouse with an eager intent face.

Many others said they too thought they had heard a distress-signal, but in the dim of wind

and wave one could not be certain of any distant sound.

'This wind would strain the cables of any ship afloat,' said the rector.

'Ay!' said an old man, with a laugh; 'no skipper would be fool enough to try and anchor off St. Meloc's roads to-night.'

'There!' cried the lad on the boat; 'there it was again: a distress-gun as plain as it could be, and nearer too.'

Several others had heard it also, and in ten minutes or so almost everybody heard the sound, though it was still confused in the wild hubbub of the storm. As this grew every moment fiercer and the din more deafening one could hardly catch any definite sound, and the whole air seemed full of the rage of seething billows and the hiss of rain and shrieking of the blasts. And so the minutes fled by, and half an hour after the rector had come down they were still listening and watching on the shore.

Then of a sudden came one of those wind-lulls that had been fewer and fewer since nightfall, and for half a minute one could hear the voices of those behind one and the solemn tolling of St. Meloc's bells.

'There, there!' cried all together; 'no mistake in that.'

Loud and near boomed the distress-gun, seemingly quite close in to shore.

'That ship must be within half a mile of the lighthouse,' said Mr. Wolfe.

'Ay, sir, not half a knot's length farther; and if she drives on like that ten minutes longer she'll be upon the Beads.'

He had hardly stopped speaking when there rose up from the lighthouse a flare of blue light that cast a lurid glare over all the bay. For a brief space one could see the black headland standing out grim and frowning as though to hide the bay; St. Meloc's wall and the tower and rectory, the five grim 'Monks' around whose base the waves were leaping and seething, one wilderness of foam, and the crowd gathered on the wet sands mingled with the stranded boats and fishing-gear. But though for a moment they saw these things, no one heeded them; all were peering out to sea.

'They want to show 'em the Beads,' explained one.

'Ay, and there they are,' said another, pointing eastward, where through the line of tossing spray the black string of rocks showed in the weird light.

Presently the light dropped out, and the sea, rocks and bay were left in blacker darkness than before. But hardly five minutes had gone by when another light broke over the waters, and this time not from the Black Monks, but from the other side of the bay.

'She has answered!' they cried, as masts, rigging, and hull of a great ship were thrown into sight by the bluelight she had sent up.

'See how she's driven!' one cried out.

'Ay,' said another; 'she can't help herself no more.'

'In five minutes more she'll be upon the Beads.'

'Can nothing be done for her?' asked the rector earnestly.

'Nay, sir, what *could* be done for her? No

one can help her if she can't help herself. We can only wait and help them as are in her.'

'For God's sake let us lose no time in doing that, then !' he replied.

'Not we, sir ! All's ready ; but while she drives a' that'n we couldn't make to her, not if we had a lifeboat manned wi' a crew of pilots.'

As the blue-light died out, and all was black again, another distress-gun boomed across the waters ; and this came mingled with the howling of the storm, the splash and hissing of the rain on sands and sea, the surging of the billows and the solemn tolling from St. Meloc's Tower—a solemn knell.

It was an awful night ! All along that cruel coast the sea made lamentation in her hollow caves for the men she would drown that night, and the black sky wept for them ; and the breakers tossed their ghostly arms to drag them down into their graves.

Suddenly three guns were fired together, and another light was sent up from the doomed and dying ship.

'She has struck !' they cried upon the shore. 'God help them that are in her ! See, there she lies ! They could light her from the Black Monks—ay, and they're doing it. Look ! she lies in the light now ; but God help her, now she is sinking ! Man the boats, mates!—ready, ay ! Now, rector, see if we waste time or no !'

And everywhere was vehement haste and hurry to put off to help her. Already the different crews had been arranged, and these were standing by their boats which they had brought down to the water's-edge.

In a few moments half a dozen boats were battling with the waves, and many wives and mothers stood praying on the shore. The rector may have been praying too, but he was not on the shore.

'I'm as good an oar as any man of you,' he had said, 'and I can't stand here while they're sinking yonder. Let me go!'

And so he too was straining every muscle and forcing all his strength into his arms, and his boat was not the hindmost either; and now it struggled on a few moments, and now was driven back its own length by a frantic wave; and now those on land could see it lifted up upon a wave's crest, showing black against the light that was poured in vain upon the water from the light-house rock; and now it was out of sight, sunk in the trough of a wave that seemed to hunger for it as a ravenous beast desires its prey.

And all the while the great ship sank lower and lower; and at last they gave up even attempting to pump, and waited with their boats full, trusting that they might hold out until relief should come, seeing how near they were to land.

The foremost boat had already passed the Beads, and having doubled was making straight for the sinking ship, from which it was separated by only a few hundred yards of boiling sea. All on the shore were breathless; the ship alone was visible to them, save now and then when one of the boats was lifted up against the line of light.

The second boat doubled the Beads; it was the rector's, and no one in it had broken the deathly silence for five minutes, when there rose up a sudden wail—the death-cry of three hundred

souls—and looking up, he saw the ship was gone.

‘She’s gone!’ he cried hoarsely.

‘Ay, ay, sir! God send we may be in time to save some of them that were in her, but I’m ’most afear’d.’

Then straining yet more vehemently, they drove their boat onward through the darkness, until they too were in the lane of yellow light that was poured out from the Black Monk rock over the tumbling waste of waters.

CHAPTER III.

NOT one of that ship’s crew, not one of her passengers was saved.

The sudden squall that hastened her own destruction, shattered her boats upon the Beads; and not one soul, sailor or passenger, was picked up or could make his way to land.

Reluctantly and sorrowfully those who had put out to help them turned homewards, having done nothing, though not until they were well assured that no living creature was wrestling with the furious sea.

‘What is that, though?’ cried one of the men. ‘See there! Can’t you see something white upon the Beads?’

‘It looks like a crate or hen-coop,’ said another.

‘Ay, and most like it is. Give us a glass—we’ll soon see.’

For a few moments he was silent, then he cried out:

‘Yes, mates; it’s a hen-coop lashed up in something white—canvas or calico, I think.

There's a child there, as sure as any of you were children once. Well, rector, what's to be done ?

'It would be madness to try and take the boat upon the Beads ?'

'Madness, sir. How would it be to row round inside the bay ? The crate will get washed over soon enough, ye may be sure ; and then we could pick it up perhaps, or tow it home.'

'Very well—let go !'

And they doubled the Beads again ; and rowing parallel with them as best they could—for they were often driven inland and out of their course by wind and wave—came in time to a spot almost opposite that on which the crate was perched upon the Beads. But though they waited long, it showed no sign of motion, and they began rightly to suspect it was wedged, and would not be dislodged until the force of the waves broke it up at last.

'It's not fifty yards off,' said one of the men, 'and in half as many minutes it will be dashed to pieces. I'll not sit here and see it. I'm a lad, and strong enough to swim five times the distance in a sea twice as bad as this. Here, mates ! let's have the rope round me, and I'm off.'

This fellow—a harum-scarum lad of twenty or so, a Hercules and Neptune all in one—was one of the village favourites ; at school he had been leader in all mischief, as now he was in all dangerous adventures.

'Well, Bart, it's no good saying you Nay if you please to say Yea,' his mates replied reluctantly ; 'or else perhaps——'

'No, no ; let me go, and lose no time about it. Here, keep the rope's-end in the boat, and let us

have your knife, Mavor—I shall have to rip that thing open, I expect.'

So they gave him a sailor's knife, and with the rope around his waist, he plunged into the boiling sea.

Very eagerly they watched the lad, and now and then cheered him lustily ; he could not make way quickly, but was driven hither and thither by the violence of the waves, and of course his work was made more difficult by the rope around his waist. Still he did not seem to tire or lose heart ; and though he got on but slowly, he made his way gradually to the Beads.

Had he been approaching them from the other side he must have been dashed upon them by the frantic breakers and killed upon the rocks. But here, on their inner side, the water, though by no means calm or safe even for a swimmer, was not so lashed into fury as to mean certain destruction for one drawing near. And at last they saw him make his final stroke, which brought him to a low shelf of rock thickly overgrown with seaweed. Thrown on to this as he was with some violence, the weed broke its force, and he clung to it with both hands to pull himself up out of the waves. Luckily for Bart the Beads just here were pretty thickly overgrown with weed, and this, though it would have made them more, far more slippery for boots, did not much trouble him with his bare feet, and afforded means whereby to climb and hold on against wind and wave.

When he reached the crate he found it still unhurt, but saw that it would not long be so. So, taking out his knife, he ripped up some of the tarpaulin in which it was wrapped, and began

to break it open. This he found it easy enough to do, as it was only hurriedly fastened up with cords, inside which were more tarpaulins, and then a cradle, in which lay a tiny child. Wrapping it up as well as he could in some of the tarpaulins, he strapped it to himself, and began again to climb over the slippery rocks down to the water's edge. The return journey was more difficult in one respect, that he had a burden to carry as well as swim; but the waves were setting inland, and in the main helped him, and the rope around his waist was a help now instead of an added weight.

When he had reached the boat again and laid his burden in a cosy nook, covered with rugs and coats, he took his oar once more and soon they made the land.

Great was the curiosity and eagerness of all to see Bart's prize: all crowded round him and peered inquisitively at the little white bundle that he unfolded proudly but clumsily enough, and with much blushing and shy titter:

'A little lass!' he said, as a wealth of golden hair and two blue eyes appeared; and he held the little lass as though he thought her very dangerous for her size.

'A little lass!' cried the women; 'hear him! Why, Bart, it's a lad, and a beauty too!'

This seemed to reassure him much.

'But the poor child'll catch his death if you hold him in your arms like that, out here,' said one officious mother of a family. 'Take him up to the village and put him warm to bed, or you might as well have let him drown.'

So a goodly company went with him, the rector among the rest.

‘What shall you do with the child, Bart?’ he asked.

‘Why, bring him up,’ laughed the lad, with an awkward grin, but rather proud all the same of his new parental dignity.

‘Won’t he be a burden to you, Bart? hadn’t you better let me take the child? You will be getting married one of these days and having sons of your own to feed and clothe, and meanwhile your mother has her hands full enough without a child to nurse and do for; I have to have a nurse for my little girl, you see, so it will be all one trouble to me.’

But Bart shook his head; he was much too proud of his prize to give it up so readily.

‘Ay, sir; but *you*’ll be getting married one of these days, perhaps,’ he said good-naturedly, and then there’d be three families at the rectory. Thank you kindly for naming it, but I’ll keep the little chap, and mother and me will do the best we can for him, you see.’

The rector had another argument, but he was too considerate and fearful of giving pain to make use of it.

So, very much to the consternation of his good mother, Bart turned in to their cosy little cottage, and laid down upon her lap his white burden, which instantly began to bellow lustily, to his untold delight. And there the rector left the child; and saying good-night to Bart, he strode on his way up the village, and in quarter of an hour was sitting by his lonely fireside, listening to the storm without, and waiting till his old housekeeper should have brought his supper in.

Meanwhile Bart was bending over the little

boy that lay crowing and smiling in Mrs. Mallord's lap, and chuckling to himself to think he was become its natural guardian and foster-father; which seemed to him such an excellent joke that at times it was too much for him, and he had to get up and march once or twice around the room, bubbling over with merriment the while.

'I say, mother,' he said during one of these attacks, 'you didn't think when you got up this morning that you should go to bed a grandmother, eh?'

Mrs. Mallord shook her head and rocked the baby to and fro, as though it were only yesterday instead of eighteen years or more since Bart himself had lain thus upon her knee.

'Nay, Bart,' she said heartily, 'but I hope to be grandmother to your *own* children before I die; not but it's a bonny child, and I do believe he knows you saved his life, poor thing.'

This alarming precocity filled Bart with admiration and delight.

'Do you know me, little lad,' he cried, stopping before the boy, and bending down over his tiny face. 'You'll remember I brought you off the Beads, eh?'

But his newly-found son appeared to object to remembering or knowing anything; he rubbed his eyes piteously with his small pink knuckles, or rather with the dimply sites where in process of time his knuckles would appear, and showed in every way he could that to sit up longer would bore him very much.

So Mrs. Mallord gave him over to her son's keeping, while she busied herself in getting out the old wooden cradle and making it ready for their youthful guest.

CHAPTER IV.

BART lay awake for a long while that night thinking about the boy, and building castles in the air, whereof the boy was lord. The child was to grow up in a wonderful manner, while he himself was to remain at his present age, and then, both being lads together, they would be partners in a smack, and live together in unexampled cosiness and good fellowship. They would have such pleasant times together, the little lad and he! Out on the dancing sea at sunrise in the long summer days—home again with laden boat in the mellow evening. Out together in wild weather, and passing together through wonderful adventures. And at last the little lad should marry, and Bart would be a sort of uncle and second father to his children; and when the little lad was ill, Bart would nurse him; and when Bart was ill, the little lad should never know it. And as he dozed the castles grew finer, and the little lad's adventures more wonderful, until at last Bart fell asleep.

He woke up with a start an hour or two later on, and the memory of the storm and the little lad came back to him in a queer dim way, so that he hardly knew what had been dreaming and what had really taken place. But presently the truth came back to him, and he knew the boy was really there in the cottage, and Bart longed to see him. So jumping out of bed he crept across the dark cottage to his mother's room, and softly lifting the latch, stole in to where the cradle stood. It was quite dark, and he could see nothing; but he listened, and could

hear the soft, soft breathing of the wee boy ; and stooping down he knelt beside the crib, and felt for the child's face with his great gentle hand.

It felt so warm and soft ! He smiled to himself in the dark, and thought : ' The child's mine—I'm his father now, poor lad.' And stealing away as quietly as he had come, Bart went back to his bed.

Once again he woke up in the early dawn, and again he went to delight himself with a sight of his little lad. The grey and chilly light fell on the child's face from the curtainless window, and Bart could see his eyes open as he made some slight sound coming in, and they rested lazily on Bart ; and presently the child broke into a smile, as if he really recognised the young man and was very glad to see his handsome face. This filled Bart with pride and joy, so that, for the first time, he went so far as to stoop down and kiss the tiny face lying there so warm and soft.

' You deserve to be a lord ! ' he said proudly to his child. And as he heard his own words a sudden cloud came across his happiness. He shook his head regretfully, and went back to bed quite sad and lonely.

While the rector was sitting at his breakfast that morning his housekeeper came in to say Bartholomew Mallord was at the door, and wanted to see him, if he pleased. So Mr. Wolfe got up and went out to the hall, where he found Bart looking somewhat grieved.

' I've come about the little one,' he began at once.

' I hope he is all right,' said Mr. Wolfe ; ' he didn't seem to have suffered from the chill.'

'He's as right as right,' replied Bart mournfully; 'but I've come to give him up. You were right, sir; I've no business wi' the boy.'

'Indeed, I said nothing at all like that,' said Mr. Wolfe. 'Who has so good a right as you, if we fail to get at those to whom he belongs by birth?'

Bart shook his head.

'I forgot,' he said, 'that the little lad might be the son of gentlefolk—and I'm thinking that he is, too. Now if I took him and brought him up in our rough place, it would be doing the lad a wrong. So you see I should be dealing unfair by him.'

This was the argument Mr. Wolfe had not liked to use.

'I think there is no doubt from the child's dress, and indeed from his face, that he is what you say. And perhaps you are right in thinking it would be unfair to bring him up as though he were not so. Years to come we might find his own friends, and they might be ashamed of him if he were not in all respects equal to themselves.'

'That's it!' said Bart cheerfully; 'and we must think of the little lad first. So if you are still willing to let him be with your own little girl, I'll bring him whenever you tell me. And you'll let me see him now and then?'

'Whenever you like, Bart; as often as ever you choose. And when he is big enough to understand, he shall surely be told how you saved him from the storm. Another thing—if we fail to find his friends, he must have a name. There was nothing found upon him to give one any clue?'

'When she undressed the little lad, my mother found this around his neck, sir.' And Bart pulled out a thin gold chain with a medal hung thereon.

The rector took it and examined it. On one side it represented the slaughter of the martyr babes of Bethlehem, and bore the inscription, 'Omnes SS. Innocentes, orate pro me;'* and on the other, the Holy Family.

'This was all?' Mr. Wolfe asked.

'Yes, that was all. Would you allow the boy to wear this still, sir, if you please.'

'If you wish it. I expect it is a Catholic badge; but if you found it on the child, I suppose he has a right to it—it is all his possession now. But it tells us nothing of the child's name.'

'They say the figure-head has come ashore,' Bart answered, 'and the ship's name, too—it was the *Tristram*, sir; how would that do for a name?'

'Very well. But if the name of the ship is known, I expect we shall be able to find the boy's friends. If not, he shall be called *Tristram*.'

Bart seemed very proud of this idea.

'You'll christen him *Tristram*!' he exclaimed; 'and I'll stand for him, sir, eh?'

'If, as I feel sure, the child's parents were Catholics, he is certainly baptized already; so we need not christen him, but we shall call him *Tristram*, nevertheless; and for his surname, let him take yours.'

This quite consoled Bart for the loss of the christening.

* 'All ye Holy Innocents pray for me.'

‘Tristram Mallord!’ he said; ‘Tristram Mallord! that’s grand. Why, Mr. Tristram Mallord, Esquire! that’ll sound fine.’

CHAPTER V.

BUT Mr. Wolfe was wrong in thinking that the friends of the little boy would certainly claim him. They may never have seen the advertisements; they may not have known at that time that anyone belonging to them had embarked in the *Tristram*; a thousand chances might have concurred to prevent them ever learning that in an out-of-the-way fishing village a tiny child had been cast up by the sea, who was of their own flesh and blood.

However it was, so it was; no word ever came to St. Meloc’s of inquiry for the little boy, and as the days went by Mr. Wolfe gave up wondering or expecting that any should.

So the small bit of human flotsam and jetsam was brought to the rectory, to the intense but temporary disgust of the rector’s three-year-old daughter, and to the equally strong but permanent displeasure of Mrs. Corkitt, the housekeeper.

Luckily for Tristram, this dislike was not at all shared by Janet Wolfe’s kind-hearted nurse, a cheery, good-tempered girl called Martha, who was full of interest in the motherless boy, and eager to do all she could to show it.

Janet soon forgot to dislike the boy, and as he grew and was able to talk and stump about, she took a great and motherly pride in teaching him both these accomplishments.

So Tristram grew, and knew nothing of himself except that he was: knew nothing of his dead father and mother—if they both were dead—nothing of his own rescue from the sea, of his forlorn condition and orphanhood. Bart often came to see him, in spite of the grim looks of Mrs. Corkitt, and still oftener Tristram was taken to Mrs. Mallord's cottage to see him.

Thus time went by, and as it went, from a baby Tristram became a child, and Janet was still a child; and from a child he grew into a boy, and a very handsome boy he was. Of course he knew then more of his own history, and in consequence Bart and he were fast friends.

Mrs. Corkitt liked him no better, and when she was very grumpy Tristram would slip off to the cottage, and go with Bart shrimping on the rocks, or out to sea in his boat. On these occasions Janet had to be left behind, and that was a constant source of complaint with her.

'Don't you see,' the boy would say, 'that it's easy enough for me to slip off, but it's quite hard for you to manage it; especially when that old elephant' (why 'elephant' I cannot explain) 'keeps your hats locked up on purpose.'

'I could go without a hat,' Janet would declare manfully.

'No, you couldn't; Mr. Wolfe would kick up a row. It wouldn't matter so much just on the shore; but you couldn't go down the village like a Bluecoat-boy.'

'Bluecoat-boys never *do* go down the village.'

'Janet, you are a silly! You know well enough that they don't wear hats—that's why you would look like one; 't any rate, it wouldn't

do. And if you did come, Bart would never take you out in the fishing-boat.'

'Why not? I'm not sick. I'm older than you.'

'If you lived to be a thousand years older than me, and were never sick all the time, you'd never be a boy,' Tristram would conclude.

Whereto Janet always replied with much resentment that she couldn't help it, which Tristram never tried to prove she could.

But for all that the two were much together, for very often they asked Mr. Wolfe to let them go out from breakfast until supper time, and take their dinner with them; and they used then to go far along the coast, which they got to know as well as any fisherman in the bay. Those were pleasant times, and Tristram rejoiced in them with all the eagerness of his happy nature.

He was a very tall boy, much taller than Janet, and his golden hair had darkened year after year till it was nearly black; he wore it very short, and perhaps that helped to give his dark face and eyes the keen look which certainly did not belie him. Tristram was wonderfully strong; his bones seemed covered with sinew and muscle, and his joints were supple as those of an athlete. Janet was quite different to this. A short, fair girl with large dreamy eyes, and indolent ways that she only fought against for the sake of bearing Tristram company.

Tristram was much cleverer than Janet, and at their lessons, in spite of her three years' seniority, Janet was behind him not only in Latin, arithmetic, and things of that kind, but in

history, French, and subjects in which she ought easily to have held her own. Tristram rather liked work, and it was much less merit in him to study than it was in Janet, who hated it; but if he liked work he liked play too—his was a sort of *thorough* nature that did everything with eagerness that it ever did at all.

He was very reckless, and this often brought him into trouble. He frequently annoyed Mrs. Corkitt beyond her powers of endurance; and he was always so much amused at her anger that he could hardly be made sorry for it. He often got into trouble with Mr. Wolfe, too, because he had done something dangerous, and, as the rector thought, had only come home alive and safe by a chance, so to say. Once he swam out to the Beads when the tide was falling; and another time he climbed up the lighthouse rock at high tide, nearly frightening the lighthouse-keeper out of his wits by suddenly rushing in with a shout of triumph when he had accomplished the ascent.

He worshipped Mr. Wolfe, though he spoke very little to him; and he was never at all shy in his company—much less so, in fact, than Janet. But he was oftener in hot water, and being a boy was punished more severely. It was odd to see the boy and his foster-father together, they were so strangely alike in many things, and yet so different that even a stranger would hardly have thought that Tristram was really Mr. Wolfe's son. They were both dark, and had the same grave eyes, and close-cropped black hair, and the same healthy dark skin. The thin sensitive lips of man and boy were the same, and though Mr. Wolfe's face was heavy, and Tristram's was well-

cut and refined, in both it was strong and determined. With all his recklessness, Tristram was not at all frivolous or feather-brained ; he looked with scorn on practical jokes, unless they were played upon himself, when he was pleased to laugh at them patronizingly ; he never giggled or showed off, as Janet often did when elated ; and in his gestures and speech he always seemed to keep an unusual old-fashioned dignity and quietness.

All this was so when Tristram was eleven or twelve years old, and Janet about fourteen.

CHAPTER VI.

‘JANET, get up ! Wake, will you—wake up, I say !’

‘Yes, very well ; stop thumping the door ! Is it a nice morning, Tristram ?’ Janet answered, sitting up in bed and rubbing her eyes sleepily.

‘Morning ! Why it will be night soon if you don’t get up. Yes, it’s a gorgeous day. Hurry up, do, and we’ll get leave to go to St. Brithuc’s.’

St. Brithuc’s was a bay some four miles from St. Meloc’s, where there were caves and a rocking-stone. They had often been there and spent the day climbing about the rocks, or crab-fishing in the pools. This was a special treat, and Janet made haste to get up ; she was generally much slower in coming down than Tristram, who learned a good many of his lessons in the hour before eight o’clock breakfast.

It was a fine September morning, and as Mr. Wolfe intended to be out all day, he readily consented that the two should go off on their expedition, only stipulating that they should get back

by seven o'clock, by which time it would be growing dusk.

By nine o'clock Janet and Tristram were on their way, each with a satchel of provisions slung over their shoulder, and a stout hooked walking-stick shod with iron in their hand. First they had to go down into the village and out into the bay, round the edge of which they kept close under the rocks, and so rounded St. Meloc's point and came into a broad open bay called Scarslick, with smooth sands, over which they walked easily.

'We won't begin to climb about till we get to St. Brithuc's,' said Tristram; 'then we shall be able to spend as much time there as we like.'

So they walked on steadily now, chatting as they went, and comparing this expedition to St. Brithuc's with their last, a month or two before.

'It is only quarter to ten now,' said Tristram, looking at his watch—a present from Bart on his last birthday, *i.e.* on the last anniversary of his rescue from the sea—'so we have nine hours and a quarter; if we get there by half-past ten, and allow an hour and three-quarters to get back, we shall have nearly seven hours left. Seven hours at St. Brithuc's, Janet, is much better than we generally get.'

'Last time we could only spend two or three.'

'When they had crossed the bay, they climbed a steep path that led over the rocks into a very small cove, or bay, called the Hole, from which they could get to St. Brithuc's through a cave.'

So by the time Tristram had said, they were groping their way through the dim, cool caverns, Janet often dipping into deep pools, and oftener

still falling down without any apparent excuse, simply because it was a way she had. However, she never hurt herself much, or if she did she never grumbled ; and Tristram was so much used to these small accidents, that he never said more to comfort her than :

‘ There ! Really, Janet, you might have remembered that place ;’ or, ‘ Well, Janet ! next time please try to splash less when you want to flounder.’

But, although she floundered, Janet was perfectly content. As she said, she adored caves, by which she did not mean to say that she had organized any new system of idolatry, but only that she liked groping and clambering in these mysterious dark places, where the solemn breaking of the sea upon the shore could be heard all day, and the strong sea smell was always in one’s nostrils.

‘ I say, Tristram, do you think anyone was ever caught here by the tide ?’ she asked in an awe-struck tone, as they stood still to take breath half-way through the cave that joined St. Bri-thuc’s to the Hole.

‘ Lots,’ replied he briefly, not at all in an awe-struck tone. ‘ Allow one on an average every five years, you get twenty in a century : the world is at all events six thousand years old, that would make twelve hundred in all. Why, the place would hardly hold them, if they were all here together.’

Janet shuddered.

‘ How awful, Tristram !’

But Tristram, though he was thinking to himself, and putting himself in the place of each of

the tide-caught twelve hundred, and realizing the agony and horror with his wonderful imaginativeness, did not shudder. Presently they went on.

‘Do you think they all went to hell?’ Janet inquired with much stolidity.

Tristram turned round upon her sharply.

‘Why on earth should they? I should think not indeed!’

Janet was wondering why she had wondered thus.

‘I meant—people don’t generally—don’t die like that, you know—all alone, without any prayers or anything. The clergyman generally goes to prepare them and all that.’

‘That’s all very well if you can get it,’ was Tristram’s rather practical answer to this difficulty; ‘but if not, why I expect they make it up somehow.’

‘Who do?’ inquired Janet, somewhat puzzled; she had not seen Tristram’s gesture towards the roof of the cave, and was unable to follow the flights of his quicker thoughts.

‘Oh, God, of course,’ he answered hastily, not from irreverence, but simply from shyness. ‘Besides,’ he went on, ‘what does the clergyman do after all?’

Janet began to wonder whether she ought not to be rather shocked.

‘Oh, Tristram, I don’t think you ought to say that,’ she gasped, floundering at the moment into a pool, and splashing a few pints of sea-water over his back as she spoke.

‘Do hold up, Janet. Say what? Why, I’ve said nothing yet. But what *does* the clergyman

do ? He reads a chapter, which the man could do himself generally——'

'Why, he wouldn't have a Bible here,' Janet took leave to remark, with stern matter-of-factness.

'I wasn't speaking of people caught by the tide then : they certainly would not be able to read a chapter, and consequently would not be expected to. Well, then, the clergyman says some prayers, which the person could do, too, just as well for himself.'

'Not such long ones—out of the Prayer-book and all,' again objected Janet, trying to stretch across a pool, which she could very easily have jumped quite safely.

'You'll not do it—there ! I knew you would ! You splash so, one might as well be walking with a water-tub.—The longness doesn't matter ; and as for the Prayer-book, why a man's own prayers would be every bit as good.'

'Still, I should hate to die like that—away from home, in the dark and wet,' said Janet, who could not quite follow the argument, but was sure of her own feelings on the subject.

'Of course. I should hate to die at all ; but if I were to have to die like that, I should do the best I could, and expect God to help me out.'

'Ought one to hate dying, quite ?' again inquired the orthodox Janet, quite certain that *she* did.

'Well, one *does*, you see ; so I expect one can't help that exactly. I say, I'm going up the Tooth ; you'd better keep in the sun and try to get dry. Don't begin eating till I come down.'

The Tooth was a detached rock, standing in

the middle of the bay, very difficult to climb, and a building-place for many gulls and sea-larks. Tristram made for this, and was soon clinging to its steep sides, and pulling himself up from ledge to ledge, while Janet looked for shells and tried to catch shrimps in a net that screwed on to the iron foot of her walking-stick. After half an hour's climbing Tristram came down to her, and joined her in her shrimp-fishing for a time; after which they chose a nice flat rock whereon they sat down to take their meal.

'I wonder whether it's going to rain,' Janet remarked, looking out to sea, where there was a peculiar mist that seemed to be rolling in to land.

'Yes; I expect it will. Never mind; we'll go and take shelter in the caves.'

'And be caught by the tide and drowned—and make twelve hundred and two!' objected Janet decidedly, who had taken Tristram's figures quite literally.

'It won't begin for an hour at least, and I dare say it will blow inland. We can go into the caves for a little while and see.'

But the thought of the twelve hundred was too much for Janet.

'No, indeed we won't; the tide is coming in, and you know it's very treacherous here. We had better climb up the sheep-path, and ask them to give us shelter at St. Brithuc's. We've often got milk there, and the woman's very nice.'

So Tristram had to give in. He was right, however, in saying it would not rain for some time. Though the mist was over them by three o'clock, the rain did not come down for half an hour later. Directly it began, they scuttled up

the sheep-tracks leading to the fields up over the rocks, and made all haste to reach the farm before it should have got very heavy.

St. Brithuc's farm stood high up over the sea, enclosed in its own cosy homestead, and surrounded by a large walled garden and orchard, sheltering it from the keen sea-breezes. Tristram and Janet had often gone there to ask for a drink of water, or to get milk, and the farmer's wife knew them well by sight. She now welcomed them most heartily, and insisted on Tristram's taking off his coat to dry, as it had got wet just on the shoulders and sleeves. Janet had worn a little cape, which had also got wet, and was now hung up on the open hearth before the kitchen fire. They had never been into the house before, and both of them looked around it curiously, to note all there was to be seen.

Over the fireplace there was a large wooden crucifix, the first they had ever seen, and on one wall was hung a picture of Our Lady holding Our Lord out in her arms for some saints to worship. But Tristram's attention was especially caught by a rosary hanging to a hook upon the dresser, to the end of which was fastened a medal.

'May I look at that?' he asked, nodding towards this. 'Those beads, I mean.'

The woman smiled and gave him leave, taking it down and giving it into his hands.

'I have something like this,' he said, touching the medal, 'though not quite the same.'

The woman seemed surprised.

'Have you?' she said. 'You're not a Catholic, sir, are you?'

'No. Is it 'Catholic' to have things like that? Look, Janet, isn't it like mine?'

'Why, one side is just the same!' she answered, much impressed. 'Show her yours, Tristram.'

He did so as she suggested it, taking off the gold chain that now lay quite close round his neck, which formerly had hung down loose and long. The woman seemed to wonder much as she looked at it, and most of all that Tristram should wear it.

'I suppose a Catholic gave it you?' she said.

'I don't know. I have worn it since I was a baby,' Tristram replied; 'I wear it all night, too, I only take it off to wash. I always say what's written on it. I say it in Latin now—when I was little the nurse taught me to say it in English.'

This seemed to explain things to the farmer's wife.

'Ah, I see! You had a Catholic nurse. God bless her!'

'No. Only I had that on when I first came to her, and so she always took care I should wear it, and got Mr. Wolfe to tell her what the words were in English.'

'Well! God be praised! And if you're not a Catholic now, you'll be one some day, sir, never fear. . . . But, while we're talking, you must be hungry; let me get you some tea, poor things.'

I don't know that they could really say they were very hungry, but they liked farmhouse teas as well as other people, and did not make a very vigorous refusal of the good woman's hospitality. So while they looked around the room and examined all there was to see, their hostess bustled about and got ready a most tempting en-

tertainment. She pulled out from its corner a big round table of very old oak, polished and black—not with varnish or oil, but lapse of years—on which she arranged a tea-service of queer green and gold dragon china, and a stout, comfortable-looking silver tea-pot and sugar-basin; then she brought out a huge loaf of brown bread and a smaller one of white, butter, jam, and a solid plain cake, which instantly appealed to the best feelings of Tristram and Janet.

‘Now, my dears, will you be so good as to sit down and make yourselves at home? a little tea will pass the time away. I don’t think the rain will clear off again to-night, so you’d better sit still here till six o’clock, when my son will have come in from work; he’ll put the horse in the trap and drive you over to St. Meloc’s in quarter the time you’d walk it—in the rain and all.’

This plan sounded very nice, only it seemed to be giving their good hostess a great deal of trouble.

Tristram said so; but she wouldn’t hear of that, and so they were fain to agree.

Meanwhile they had a very good tea; and Mrs. Oldham waited upon them, and seemed to be as much pleased at their enjoyment of her hospitality as if they were old friends, instead of two little vagrants sheltering from the storm.

CHAPTER VII.

MR. WOLFE was rather relieved to see Tristram and Janet drive up safe and dry, and well wrapped up in cloaks lent them by Mrs. Oldham; he had, of course, thought they were sure to try

and find shelter somewhere, but his knowledge of Tristram's hardihood had at once suggested to him a fear that they should have taken refuge in any of the caves. However, here they were in the highest spirits, and very full of their adventure. Not that they poured out all the account of it into Mr. Wolfe's ear—that was not their way; it was to Martha that they told everything, who, having long ceased to be nurse, was still kept on at the rectory as the children's own servant or schoolroom maid.

She entered warmly into their praises of Mrs. Oldham, and listened with good-natured interest to all they had to tell about her; but Mrs. Corkitt, who had also found out where they had sheltered, and overheard a few words of Tristram's said to Martha, was not at all grateful for the good woman's hospitality or kindness.

'I warrant she's a Papist!' Mrs. Corbitt very safely announced. 'I know them; they're all of a piece.'

'If they are, then it must be a very nice piece—mustn't it, Janet?' said Tristram, indignantly, loyal to his new friend; 'I hope it's a large piece.'

Mrs. Corkitt sniffed. Besides alluding to her now and then as an elephant or a kangaroo—to neither of which animals could I ever see that she bore much resemblance—Tristram's usual name for her was the war-horse. This sniff was the snort or neigh with which she was supposed to sniff the battle from afar.

'No doubt you think so, Master Tristram, with your medals and—and——' Mrs. Corkitt was at a loss for a climax to her sentence.

‘And what?’ insisted Tristram. ‘What besides the medals? I suppose the *other* medal is that one with Queen Adelaide giving away prizes to Bluecoat boys on it, that you gave me on my birthday. I have only those two.’

Mrs. Corkitt’s sniff grew shriller. The medal had been an ancient grievance of hers, and many had been the battles between Martha and her on the subject. Her argument was that no idolatries should be allowed at St. Meloc’s rectory; Martha waived that general principle and founded her defence on the evident intention of Tristram’s dead parents; and on Mrs. Corkitt’s appealing at length to Mr. Wolfe, she was dismissed with an urgent request not to burden herself with the business of the nursery as well as that of the kitchen, and an assurance that Martha’s argument was a very fair and reasonable one.

‘Am I to tell her, then, that she’s to bring the boy up a Roman?’ Mrs. Corkitt had inquired with boiling indignation and deep scorn.

‘I shall probably bring Tristram up as my conscience directs, which is in no other religion than my own. If by any most unlikely chance he should ever himself desire to embrace the religion which must have been that of at least one of his parents, I cannot then do more than try to dissuade him by such arguments as are in my power. But you need burden yourself with no message from me to Martha on the subject. Will you please see that the door closes behind you?—the bolt does not always catch. Thank you.’

This defeat had been very far from reconciling Mrs. Corkitt to the medal, and it was always one

of her strongest arguments against Tristram. She was now roused to fresh indignation by the unlucky accident which had thrown the two children in the way of Mrs. Oldham, whose family, settled at St. Brithuc's before the Reformation, had ever since it remained faithful to the old religion. She gave way to many forebodings, and mysteriously called Martha to witness that she now, while there was still time, would fain make her master see that the thin end of the wedge had been put in by that tea and shelter.

'Well, Mrs. Corkitt,' cried Martha good-naturedly; 'Papist or no Papist, you wouldn't have had the woman turn the poor things away in the rain, or keep them and offer them nothing, surely!'

The war-horse sniff grew very shrill.

'I never knew any good come of Popish victuals yet,' Mrs. Corkitt declared; and truly enough, for her knowledge of Popish food was about as limited as her acquaintance with Catholic belief, of which she knew only a minus quantity.

The storm from which the two children had taken refuge at St. Brithuc's broke up the fine weather, and it was followed by a fortnight of wild gusty rain that made their usual expeditions along the coast impossible.

So they amused themselves as best they could. Tristram read a good deal, and often aloud; and both children went often to see Bart and his mother.

Mrs. Corkitt disapproved of these visits only less than of that to St. Brithuc's; in fact, her dis-

like to them was so much a first principle that she did not think it called for any explanation or reason, and laid it down as a natural truth.

But, though Janet was frequently kept at home by her means, Mrs. Corkitt was unable to prevent Tristram's going to see Bart as often as he liked, which was very often indeed.

One afternoon early in October, a week or two after the day at St. Brithuc's, Tristram came to Janet, who was sitting rather disconsolately looking out of the schoolroom window over the dreary sea, and asked her to come to Bart's.

'It is ironing-day, and the war-horse is busy. You can get away without any struggle. Come along, Jan.'

So they went, and arriving at Mrs. Bart's, as they always called Bart's mother, found it was her ironing-day too. But this was no disappointment, as Mrs. Bart always talked best while she was ironing; and it was such a chilly day that it was very pleasant to sit in the warm cottage, from whose windows you could look right down the old fashioned street into the bay and out to sea.

'Now, Mrs. Bart, I'm going to go on with the ship. Janet shall help you to iron, and you shall tell us a story. We will wait till five; and if Bart has not come in by then, we'll have tea without him.- Go on with the story; and mind you don't listen too hard and scorch the things, Jan.'

Janet, who liked ironing better than reading or lessons, tucked up her sleeves and put on a white apron; and Tristram went to a big chest by which he sat down, and which contained wood

and tools for the ships he was building under Bart's direction. Mrs. Bart smiled good-naturedly, and began to think of a story.

'Well, really, my dears, I can't think of any new story,' Mrs. Bart declared, well knowing the answer that was sure to follow.

'All the better ; tell us one of the regular ones. Tell us about St. Meloc's or St. Brithuc's, any of the old lot. If you go wrong we shall be able to set you right in any of them.'

Mrs. Bart laughed and began.

'A long time ago, before this village was built, there lived here a very good man called Meloc. Some say it was as long ago as the time of Julius Cæsar, and that he was one of the Britons that you have got pictures of in your history-book ; but I've never seen any picture of St. Meloc. We know from the signboard of St. Meloc's inn, that he was not a savage like them, dyed blue and what not, sitting in a boat with no oars, and dressed in skins and that. So some say he did not live quite so far back as that, and that he crossed over here from Brittany, and that's why he's called a Briton. However, here he was, and a very good man too. He prayed almost all night, and all day he went about preaching to the people, and telling them to be good and do their duty by God and man. He had built a little chapel for himself, and he lived in a little cell over the door of it, in which there was a rope so he could ring a big bell hanging outside whenever there was a storm, to warn ships off the shore. When folks got to know more about him, and how he spent all his time serving God and helping other people, a good many came and

joined him, to learn of him how to be better Christians, and go about with him to preach and all.

‘So they had to build a bigger chapel, and a monastery beside it for them all to live in; that was the church your papa preaches in every Sunday, Miss Janet, and alongside of it the rectory stood then. Besides these, St. Meloc built a high tower to his church, in which was a peal of very large bells to ring in storm-time, and a place where a light could be burnt to be seen right out at sea; and also he built a cell on the point, where one monk slept each night—being changed week and week about, I suppose each got his turn—and his duty was to keep a lamp burning and get up every hour to pray for those at sea, especially in stormy weather. When it was low tide and the Beads, as we call them, were dry, St. Meloc used to take his monks to kneel on them, and pray that no ships might be lost on them in the next storm, and so they came to be called St. Meloc’s Beads.

‘Well, round the two points in the next bay but one to this, lived at the same time another saint called St. Brithuc, who was the friend of St. Meloc and often came to see him and pray with him. And these two holy men used now and then to go together to preach to the people inland, and try to do them good. And once it happened that they did so just at the beginning of winter, and the roads were so bad that they were kept many weeks unable to get back to the coast; so they spent the time in going round preaching, and they converted many hundreds of the people, and did more good in a month or so

than twenty common men would do in a year. However, they were both anxious to get home, and as soon as a long hard frost made the ways possible they hurried away to the coast, and reached St. Meloc's cross up yonder about night-fall; there they parted, and St. Meloc came on here, reaching the bay when it was quite dark. He was very much surprised to find the lights in the tower and on the point were not yet lit, and reproached the monks for being so late and so lazy. The monks made haste to light the lamps, but seemed very awkward and ashamed, which St. Meloc thought very natural.

'As it happened it was nearly full moon, and when the clouds cleared away one could see right across the bay and out to sea.

'As soon as the lamps were lighted in the tower, St. Meloc set off to the point to see about the light there too. But he had hardly got up on to the wall, as we call it, when the moon shone out, and he looked down upon the sea. Well, you may think how the good saint started when he saw a great mast sticking up out of the water by the Beads. For a few minutes he stood still and looked down, as if he could not believe his eyes; and then running down again into the bay, he called the monks to come and see a ship sunk beyond the Beads. The monks crept out quietly, and would hardly look where St. Meloc pointed, till even he began to suspect something was amiss. He asked them when that ship had sunk, and they told him last night; and then he asked if the lamps had been forgotten then, and if the bells in the tower had been rung.

'Then it was revealed to the saint that the

monks had grown lazy in his absence, and had grown careless about the lamps, and had not rung the bells, and had slept all night instead of praying, and had feasted and amused themselves, while the ship had been sinking, and they had known nothing of it till the morning when one of the brothers saw it there. They had hoped the waves would break it up before St. Meloc came, but for a miracle it had been preserved.

‘There and then St. Meloc knelt down and prayed, and in answer to his prayer the belfry was carried away from the church and planted high up on the wall, the monastery was set down beside it, and the five monks who should have seen to bells and lamps that night were set on five rocks in the bay to do penance for their sin. So the monks never slept again and forgot the lamps, and the five who had been wanting died in great grief, and the rocks where they had done penance are still standing to be seen, and on one of them the lighthouse has been put.’

CHAPTER VIII.

BOTH Tristram and Janet had of course often heard this story before, as well as a good many more of the same sort, for that northern coast was very full of legendary saint-lore, mixed up with an addition of half-heathen, half-fairy fable.

‘I say, Mrs. Bart, do you believe there ever was such a man as St. Meloc?’ Tristram asked rather abruptly, when the tale was done.

‘Why, yes, Mr. Tristram! Hāsn’t the bay been

called after him ever since there was a cottage in it, and hasn't the church been called after him ever since it was a church? Places aren't called after folks as never were.'

'How much of that story is true, I wonder?' the boy said next.

I am afraid Mrs. Mallord was much shocked at the infidelity shown by Tristram in not believing it all, for though the Protestant religion has succeeded in making ignorant people very proud of not believing what the saints of God believed, it is by no means incompatible with much superstition. In other words, their faith is weak, but their credulity is strong as ever.

'Next time we go to St. Brithuc's, we'll ask Mrs. Oldham about St. Brithuc,' Tristram continued; 'perhaps he had a story too.'

As it happened, they went there pretty soon, for Mr. Wolfe took them for a drive in that direction, and remembering the good woman's hospitality, told them he would drop them at St. Brithuc's if they liked, and call for them again on his way home, so that they could go and thank Mrs. Oldham and then go down to the bay.

Mrs. Oldham was very glad to see the children again, and was full of inquiries as to how they had fared, whether they had caught cold, etc.; and she could not help showing her special interest in Tristram, of whom she had been thinking much since their visit, and for whom she had prayed very earnestly.

'Well now,' she said, after the greetings were over and all the questions answered, 'it is only half-past three, and you say your papa will call

again for you in a couple of hours, so you must have some tea; but as you want to go to the bay, you had better go there first, and then come back here as soon as you are tired, and we will have tea ready for you against you come.' They agreed very gladly to this, and started off, Mrs. Oldham promising to ring the farm bell at half-past four, in case they should not notice how the time went.

It was a beautiful October day, and the sun shone brightly over the sea, and over the fields wheremuchof the cornstood in the sheaf. The tide was out, and Tristram and Janet walked far out across the sands to where it was breaking in gentle power upon the shore.

'Janet,' the boy said suddenly, 'I think something is going to happen to me.'

'Oh, Tristram!' the girl gasped, 'what do you mean? Anything bad?'

Tristram laughed that odd, half-grave laugh that was peculiar to himself, and which even he only used when he was thoughtful.

'No, Janet. Only this. I have an idea that your father thinks of sending me to school.'

'Oh, Tristram!' Janet exclaimed, eloquent at least in expression, for she seemed to include in her meaning incredulous astonishment, grief, fear, and a sort of suspicion that her father must be wronged by such a suspicion.

'Yes, my dear Jan, I get more and more sure of it—I can hardly explain why, even to myself. It is partly from things he has said now and then, almost without noticing that he was saying them, partly from his *way*, and partly—oh, from a lot of things.'

They talked over this subject almost until the farm bell rang, and they had to begin climbing up the rocks, which prevented any more discussion just then.

Mrs. Oldham had got ready a very nice tea for them, which was set out on a small table in the porch, and here they made themselves very comfortable indeed.

'Mrs. Oldham,' the boy asked suddenly, 'was there ever a man called St. Brithuc?'

'Yes, indeed there was; and a very holy man too. He is said to have lived in a little hermitage on this spot, and from here he and St. Meloc used to go about the country at stated times to preach to the people. God worked a great many miracles by their means, and especially, in answer to their prayers, he saved from wreck many ships that were driven on this coast. No doubt he prayed for you, sir, up in heaven, and obtained from God the preservation of your life.'

'Mrs. Corkitt says you are an image-worshipper,' Janet remarked, in her loud slow voice.

Tristram was indignant, but Mrs. Oldham only laughed. Not herself enjoying Mrs. Corkitt's acquaintance, it was agreeable to find how intimately that lady was versed in her affairs.

'I don't know who Mrs. Corkitt is,' she said 'but she is not the first who has brought the same charge against us, with as little reason.'

'Janet, you stupid!' Tristram said in an undertone, which made her look awkward, but failed to show her wherein she had been guilty.

'Well, well, my dears,' Mrs. Oldham said cheerily, 'hard words break no one's bones, and

east of all words that aren't true. They called the Master of the house Beelzebub, we must expect them to call us something—so what does it matter what the name may be?’

‘She says you pray to the saints, and you might just as well pray to the kettle.’

‘Not just as well, my dear, for you see what we do is to ask the saints to pray for us, and they do it; but you might ask a kettle to pray for you till you were tired, and it could not, could it?’

‘Of course not. Janet, you *are* daft; do keep quiet,’ said Tristram.

‘We are told in the Bible to pray one for another, and that command binds the saints in heaven just as much as good people on earth; and their prayers are better than ours, because they are with God and see His face. We are all so weak and good for nothing, we want all the help we can get from God and each other on our way to heaven; so if we could get all the world to pray for us it would be a wonderful blessing. But you see that we can't do, while we can very easily get all the saints in heaven to pray for us; we ask them in an instant, and they know at once, and pray earnestly without grudging. Do you understand, my dears?’

‘Yes,’ Janet answered, ‘that's all very plain. I'll tell Mrs. Corkitt as much as I remember. But she says the saints are dead, and when we die we never pray any more.’

‘Dives was dead, and he prayed for his brethren on earth: if he in hell had that much charity, how much more the saints in heaven!’

‘I have often thought about this,’ Tristram

put in, to Janet's untold surprise, 'and it is so plain I can't think how even Mrs. Corkitt is stupid enough not to see. Zechariah* saw the angel praying for Jerusalem and the people of Judea. Judas Maccabeus, the great leader of the Jews against the heathens, saw in a vision Onias, who had been High Priest, praying for all the people of the Jews; and Jeremias after him, praying for them in the same way.† If you believe in praying for others at all, you must believe in the saints praying for us. I am sure St. Meloc prayed for me that I might be saved from the wreck, and the Holy Innocents prayed for me, and Mary, and St. Joseph, so I shall always go on asking them to help me by their prayers.'

Janet was awestruck; Mrs. Oldham hardly less surprised. She had, of course, heard all about the wreck, and she knew that Tristram was the boy who had been saved; but that his parents had probably been Catholics she had never been told, and so she did not know the great interest this had given the boy in all matters connected with the Church.

CHAPTER IX.

'TRISTRAM, I want you.'

'Here it comes, Jan,' the boy whispered to Janet, following Mr Wolfe into his study.

Janet was so much excited she could hardly go upstairs, and could not bring herself to go to bed until Tristram had come back and told her the result of his visit to the study.

* Zech. i. 12.

† 2 Macc. xv. 12.

As soon as they had shut the door Mr. Wolfe told Tristram to sit down, which the boy did, feeling very nervous and strange. He was not generally invited to take a chair in the study. For a few moments Mr. Wolfe did not speak, but read over a letter in his hand in a pre-occupied manner. Then he said, without preface :

‘How old are you ?’

‘Twelve, sir.’ Tristram had never called Mr. Wolfe ‘father,’ or anything but this.

‘You ought to have been at school two or three years ago. I forgot all about you. Should you dislike beginning now very much ?’

‘No, sir.’

Mr. Wolfe looked relieved.

‘I might never have thought of it but for something that has lately forced itself on my attention. You know your own story, my boy, and you must see how awkwardly it placed me in one respect.’

‘You mean about my religion ?’ the boy answered.

‘Yes. One, at least, of your parents must have been a Catholic; yet I could not bring you up in that religion, which I hold to be a false one.’

‘No.’

‘And yet—it was certainly a puzzling matter. I would not be guilty of any injustice to your dead parents, so I could think of nothing better than what I have done. I would bring you up in my own faith, promising myself that you should know what I suppose you to have been born; and in case of your ever desiring to embrace the faith of your parents, I would put no

obstacle in your way further than that of using all fair means to convince you of its untruth.'

Here Mr. Wolfe paused.

'Now you have known all this for a long time, and of late I have noticed you asking many questions which must refer to this subject, and I have seen you reading a few of my books which would not interest you unless you were thinking of this matter. Am I not right?'

'Yes, sir. I have been thinking of all this a good deal during the past year. I think a few chance passages here and there in the "Waverleys" and the "History of the Church" set me thinking first.'

Mr. Wolfe nodded.

'Well, it may be you will come finally to such a conclusion as I should desire for your own sake; but it is possible you may not. I cannot run any further risk with Janet until I see. I know you are honourable in all things; but it would be folly for me to put you on your honour to speak of none of these matters to her. It would be impossible to keep any such promise; brother and sister as you are, fifty times a day some other subject might involve it. I ought long ago to have sent you to school; and since you say you do not shrink from it now, why should you not go? This will be as much your home as ever; your holidays will be spent here, and we shall all look forward to them.'

Tristram never liked Mr. Wolfe so much as then, and if he did not say a word he looked many.

'I think of sending you to Harchester; it was my own school, and you ought to be happy there. This is only October, so you may as well go

there at once. It is the half term, and you have a good while before you to Christmas.'

It was all rather sudden and quick ; but Tristram put a good face on it.

'This letter is from Mr. Leggett, in whose hands you will be ; he is an old friend of mine—we were at Harchester together—and he will be friendly to you. I hope associating with other boys of your own rank and age, sports and games, will drive all these fancies out of your head. Good-night, Tristram ; tell Janet only what you think wise.'

In a fortnight Tristram was gone, and poor Janet was left disconsolate in the dreary old rectory on St. Meloc's wall. He was much more grieved to think of her loneliness than upset at the sudden change for himself, from home to distant school-life. His parting with Bart and Bart's mother was very trying to everybody concerned, especially as Janet sobbed loudly the whole time.

Then he rode over to see Mrs. Oldham, and had a long talk with her, in which the good motherly woman gave him some friendly advice.

'Well, good-bye, good-bye, my dear young gentleman,' she said at parting, 'and you must not be offended if a little hamper from St. Brithuc's comes to you now and then. My own lads have all been through school, and they found a hamper very welcome at times ; and a few chickens and a ham, and some jam and apples and cakes and the like, will serve to remind you of your friends at St. Brithuc's. I shall often be thinking of you, and praying for you away there among strangers. God bless you and keep you in His

sight. I cannot help often thinking of your poor dead mother, Mr. Tristram, and praying that her son may be one of us at last, as she was herself, poor thing! You have told me how that good woman the nurse taught you to say the little prayer on your medal, and how you often do ask the good saints to pray for you up in heaven. Well, my dear sir, go on doing this, and they will bring you all blessings. . . . Some at school are bad, just as some are in the world; and in every place the devil has some who gladly do his work . . . pray always, and try to keep free of them . . . Have only those with pure minds and pure tongues for your friends, and such as remember God, although they forget much beside—work and rules, and what not; and above all, have the saints themselves for your friends. Here is a little book for you . . . ask Mr. Wolfe to let you keep it; and if he will, then read a page or two when you can. It will help you to be at home with God's best friends. . . . Well, well, what a sermon I have preached, and I meant not to. . . . Good-bye, Mr. Tristram, and good-luck to you. . . . Come back at Christmas well and strong, and don't forget St. Meloc's and your old friends here.'

And when Tristram had trotted away on the old roan pony, Mrs. Oldham stood at the gate looking after him, saying many prayers for the lad, and begging her good friends the saints to be his best friends too.

I will bring this chapter to an end with Tristram's first letter home.

‘Harchester,
‘Oct. 21, 18—.

‘MY DEAR JAN,

‘How are you? I’m splendid. Harchester is a nasty place, not at all like St. Meloc’s—miles from the sea, in a poky valley, with a grubby town all round the college. The college is ever so nice though, and the fellows are jolly—some of them. Mr. Leggett is better than Corkitt; give her my love, and especially to Martha and Bart, and Mrs. Bart, and everybody. Mind you go and see Mrs. Oldham, and tell her all I ever tell you in my letters. In this house there are some very nice fellows—particularly Vane, Garstang, and Fitzmore. We get up at six, and go to bed at ten. There are no caves, only meads, but plenty of cricket, and they play better—much better—than dear old Bart. It is time to stop.

‘Your affectionate brother,
‘TRISTRAM MALLORD.

‘There’s a fellow here called Brain, who thinks sea-anemones are flowers. Please give enclosed to Mr. Wolfe.’

CHAPTER X.

TRISTRAM got on very well at school. He was clever enough to satisfy his master without his studies being much of a burden to himself, and he had a natural fondness for any sports which required strength and sinew, that made up for his lack of practice. He was very popular in his house and his special friends were many and various.

Vane, Garstang, and Fitzmaur were his three peculiar chums; they were all in his house, and

though of course much higher up in the school and older than himself, had so many things in common that the four boys were real friends.

'I say, Mallord, look at that photograph and tell me if you think it like anyone you know,' Vane said to him one day, putting an open photograph-book into his hand. The four boys were having tea in Garstang's room, who looked up curiously to see what the reply would be, and exchanged glances with Fitzmaur.

Tristram looked at the photograph, which was that of a boy about a year older than himself, with very dark grave eyes, thin sensitive lips and nostrils, a pale clear skin, and short black hair.

'He's a very handsome fellow, so it seems a calm thing to say,' laughed Tristram, 'but the only person I ever saw particularly like this I see in my looking-glass. Who do you think it like?'

'We all thought it like you—or rather we thought you like him'—said Garstang, directly we set eyes on you. The likeness is all the more true for the many differences there are between you.'

'You will be able to judge for yourself one of these days . . . he is sure to come up for the play, if not before. He only left last year,' added Vane.

Tristram looked again at the photograph.

'It is odd,' he said; 'one can hardly say what makes it so particularly like; it's a sort of general look. What's his name?'

'Catesby.'

'He's a Catholic,' put in Vane, 'descendant of Guy Fawkes, of the Gunpowder Plot.'

‘Refrain your poetic imagery,’ laughed Garstang, ‘and explain that you mean Catesby of that ilk.’

‘Robert Catesby?’

‘That’s *his* name too, all complete,’ said Vane.

As time went on Tristram liked school more and more, and so it liked him. He did not forget Mrs. Oldham’s counsel, and he often read a little of the book she had given him—an old leather-bound edition of the Saints’ Lives. Especially he delighted in St. Sebastian, St. Pancras, and the martyr saints of the first centuries. He prayed often to them, and got quite familiar with them, and through their lives with the Church in which they lived and died. Meanwhile he got on better and better with games and books, and kept out of all such mischief as he need have been ashamed of, while he was pretty often caught in such as was merely a matter of discipline or rule.

At the end of the term there was a play, and many old boys came up for this; among others Catesby, whose photograph Vane had shown him.

One afternoon, that of the day on which the play was to take place, Tristram dashed into Vane’s room, and found ‘his own lot’ there; in the window-seat behind the curtain a stranger was sitting, towards whom the others looked at once on his entrance.

Tristram stopped short, and the stranger got up and came forward; their eyes met, and involuntarily each of them broke into a smile.

‘This is your successor, Catesby; this is your precursor, Mallord,’ said Vane.

The two boys laughed. The likeness was certainly very odd. Lord Catesby looked older than he was, but so did Tristram; and anyone might have said they were brothers.

'I suppose we are not really relations by any chance?' Catesby said. 'I never heard of any of mine called Mallord. Had you ever any called by my name?'

Tristram reddened.

'I have no relations of my own name nor any other,' he said somewhat awkwardly. 'None of them knew his story.'

Lord Catesby looked up quickly, with a short keen glance, and then spoke of something else. But he seemed to have taken a fancy to Tristram; for he had a good deal of talk with him, and came and sat near him while Vane was getting tea ready. For his own part, Tristram liked Catesby very much, and felt it very easy to talk with him as to an old friend. Almost without knowing how, he found himself telling him about the sea, about the northern coast, St. Meloc's, and the old home life.

'I am much more lonely than that,' Catesby said, when Tristram had told him of the queer life he had led at the rectory with only Janet for playfellow; 'since my grandfather and grandmother died quite close together, I have lived quite alone in my holidays. I am at Ampleshaw, you know.'

In the course of the evening they met several times; and perhaps by chance, perhaps by Catesby's design, they found themselves sitting together during the play. The play was 'The Tempest,' and between one of the acts, Tristram said, laughing:

'I told you I had no relations, nor have I really any name; for I, too, am a boy-Miranda.'

Catesby looked interested, but said nothing. He did not want to force Tristram into any

explanations. But Tristram told him about the storm in a few words, and he was still speaking of his escape when the curtain rose again.

Next day they all went home for the holidays. Garstang, four or five others, and Catesby, went in the same carriage with Tristram for the first twenty miles of their journey.

'Do you mind some time telling me the rest of your story, that the third act cut short last night?' Catesby asked him as they walked up and down the platform, waiting for the train to start.

'I will, certainly. We are sure to meet again. You come often to visit your Harchester friends?'

'Yes; but we needn't wait for that. Garstang spends the last fortnight of the holidays with me at home. Do you feel inclined to spare us a week of yours? If so, you could finish your story, and would be giving me a great pleasure too.'

Tristram accepted only too gladly, and looked forward very much to the visit. The weeks at St. Meloc's flew by. Janet was in a seventh heaven of stolid happiness and content, Bart was triumphant to see how much school had improved his boy, and all the place was as kind as kind could be. But at last the time was past, and Tristram went away, his very last visit being to Mrs. Oldham at St. Brithuc's.

The week at Catesby Abbots was very pleasant; there was a nice party, and plenty of winter fun. It was a fine old place; in the middle of a huge chase, and surrounded by a wheel of avenues of cedars, hundred of years old.

Catesby was very fond and proud of the old home of his persecuted ancestors; and Tristram's delight in all its quaint and old-world beauties was very pleasant to him. The two boys had

grown into real friends, and Catesby knew all Tristram's history by heart. Only on one subject Tristram had kept his own counsel, and that was concerning his own leanings to the Catholic faith. Of them he said nothing, either to Catesby or the old chaplain, Mr. Stanhope.

When the day of departure came, and Tristram stood at the door saying good-bye to his host, Catesby said heartily :

‘ Well, this is only your first visit ; you must come again, and for a longer stay, if you don't mind the risk of being bored.’

And Tristram very gladly promised that he would.

At Harchester he began to visit the Catholic Church ; for what he had seen of the Catholics at Catesby, and most of all what he had seen of Catesby himself, had filled him with a keener desire than ever to know more of the religion of his parents. And he kept up his intercourse with the saints—his good friends in heaven, as he called them to Mrs. Oldham—and so the months went by.

CHAPTER XII.

‘ Catesby Abbots,

‘ July 15, 18—.

MY DEAR TRISTRAM,

‘ I hear from Garstang that your holidays begin on the twenty-fifth. Could you arrange to come straight here for a bit ? then, since you have been so good as to ask me, we might go north together. Do try and arrange this. I have something to tell you about myself.

‘ Your affectionate friend,

‘ ROBERT CATESBY.’

Tristram accepted this invitation ; and on the twenty-fifth arrived at Easton Station, a little village some three miles from Catesby Abbots, where he found his friend awaiting him. They left the luggage ; and without any footman or groom, drove off together in a high dog-cart, as Catesby said he wanted to take Tristram a round.

‘You could hardly see what the chase was like in January,’ he said. ‘We have two hours before dressing-time, and I will show it to you now. It is looking perfect this weather.’

It certainly was. The fresh springy turf, the enormous oaks and elms in all their summer bravery, the herds of deer and the placid lakes—all were beautiful as the heart could wish. And now and then the undulations of the road would bring the old castle into sight, nestled far away among its rookeries and gardens, peaceful and stately—a perfect English home.

‘Isn’t it beautiful, Tristram ?’ Catesby asked, looking round affectionately on all the familiar scenes.

‘Indeed, yes. How fond you must be of it all !’

Catesby laughed.

‘Yes ; one can’t help having a special feeling for the place where your people have lived and suffered, and hoped and feared, and died ; and this certainly is a dear place, even if it were nothing to me personally.’

Catesby was surprised to find himself the only guest. The two boys had the great house all to themselves, and dined alone with the solemnity of two dowagers. When dinner was over, Catesby turned to a footman and said :

‘Will you have lights put in my own sitting-room ?—not the drawing-room.’

‘Yes, my lord,’ the servant answered, and withdrew.

The boys chatted together for some time over their dessert, and then Catesby proposed a stroll in the garden before going up to his own private room. So they sauntered out of the open window on to the terrace, and thence down a flight of broad stone steps into the prim old-world garden.

‘How stately the old place looks!’ Tristram said thoughtfully. ‘It could tell strange stories if it chose, perhaps.’

‘Not very discreditable ones, I hope; it has always belonged to Catholics,’ its owner replied.

They walked on; and every now and then a fresh peep of the grand old chase or the distant rich farmlands came into sight.

‘You see the smoke over there?’ said Catesby, presently pointing away to the west, where a thin veil of mist hung over the valley.

‘Is it smoke? Yes; I see it! Is it a town?’

‘It is Catesby Magna. One of our family has sat for it pretty well ever since it was a borough. Now there is no one to sit, and a Captain Simms is the member.’

Tristram laughed. And just then a footman appeared, to say some one desired to speak to Catesby. ‘And the tea has been taken to your lordship’s study,’ the man added. So the boys turned homeward.

‘Excuse me a little while; I will not keep you long. Do you mind pouring out tea for yourself?’

It was the first time Tristram had ever known Catesby to sit in this room after dinner; but then it was the first time they had been alone to-

gether. Presently Catesby returned, took his tea to the window, looked out thoughtfully for a few minutes, and then drinking it off, came and placed his hands on Tristram's shoulders. As he did so, their eyes met, and Tristram noticed how grave and earnest his friend's were.

'Tristram,' he said, 'I have something to tell you, and it may surprise you. I don't know what to say to prepare you for it, so I will not say anything at all, but just tell you the story. Come here.' Taking up a candlestick, he led his friend out into the corridor, and stood still before a picture, in front of which hung a curtain. 'Look,' he said, drawing it back; 'who is he like?'

'Like us both,' said Tristram, laughing, but with an uncomfortable sensation of foreboding and anxiety.

'Yes. Naturally like me, perhaps; it is the conspirator Robert Catesby. But isn't it odd that it should be so like you? Well, come here: who is *this* like?' And he led Tristram to another picture.

'Like us both, again,' the boy answered unwillingly.

Catesby nodded and smiled. 'Yes; and that is my grandfather, Robert Catesby—not lord; for the attainder was not yet reversed. Now come back to my room, and I will show you something else.'

They did so, and Lord Catesby, unlocking an ebony cabinet, brought from it a velvet miniature-case, which he took to the table.

'Look, Tristram; these two boys are the two sons of my grandfather up there—his *only* sons. Who are *they* like?'

‘As before, I can only say like you and me, Catesby.’

‘Yes; and that again is natural enough in my case, for that one, James, is my father: they were twins, but my father was the younger. Now sit down, Tristram, and I will tell my story.’

Tristram did so; and Lord Catesby, standing up with his head leant against the old mantel-piece of carved black oak, said:

‘My grandfather, Robert Catesby, had two sons, twins, whose mother died when they were born; but they both lived, and their father never married again. The eldest was called Robert, the other—my father—James. They were both odd, wild boys, as Catesby boys have often been. And the eldest got into some foolish row at school, for which the silly people wanted to expel him; so he ran away and enlisted, and for years no one heard of him. James never forgot him, or ceased to do all he could to find him out; and when a lucky chance seemed to make it likely he would succeed, roused heaven and earth to get the attainder on the title reversed, in which he did succeed. Nor, of course, did he ever use the title himself until he knew for certain of his brother’s death. My father—this James—married young, and went to India; there he found a clue to his brother’s whereabouts in years gone by, and determined to follow it up. Meanwhile my grandfather died, and this place was shut up—there was no one here to look after things at all. But my father succeeded in his search, found his brother had married—some time after himself—and had returned to England almost immediately after his

marriage. Finally, he found the ship had been lost, and, so far as he could learn, no one had been saved. But it was six years after that he learnt all this, and he was at the other side of the world. Before he could come back to England, he died, and my mother soon after him ; for a year or two he had been Lord Catesby, then I succeeded. You can guess what I am going to say ?

Tristram was too much dazed to guess anything.

So Catesby continued in the same very earnest but very calm and gentle voice he had used throughout :

‘ It is this : I am certain, Tristram, that we are first cousins, and you are really Lord Catesby.’

Still, poor lad, he could say nothing ; and Catesby, gravely smiling, went on :

‘ It has been very difficult to piece together the mere shreds of evidence I could get ; but as soon I saw you, I had an instinct that you were something to me ;’ and as soon as I heard your story, this light dawned on me. Since Christmas I have been to Jamaica, whence the *Tristram* sailed, and I took with me our family solicitor, and at last I have put together the whole. I can find that the *Tristram* sailed from Port Royal with thirty passengers, of whom one called himself Robert C. Tempest ; he took berths for himself, his young wife, and a nurse. They had no child, but they took on board a child’s cradle. We compared his writing in the books of the company with that of my uncle Robert as a boy, and experts say the identity after so many years is most unusual. Tempest was our grandmother’s name, and so I think there can be no doubt at all of the identity of this man with my

uncle—only one thing is needed to clinch it, but that the very circumstances put out of reach. Well, you are the only living thing saved from the *Tristram*, and there is your extraordinary likeness to the family to witness for you. To me there can be no doubt. Father Stanhope has no doubt; he says your voice is exactly that of uncle Robert at your age. So, Tristram, that is my story. I suppose the whole case will have to be laid before the House of Lords, and it may take long, but there can be no doubt of the result. You are Lord Catesby, and I am your cousin Robert.' He bent down and took Tristram's two hands in his. 'Thank God you take it like this,' he said. 'I like to see you so sorry for me, though indeed you need not be. I am thankful this is not going to change or spoil you a bit. As for me, I always had a hankering after a seat in the Lower House; you must help me, Tristram. I shall look to you to put me up for Catesby Magna. You have a lot of influence there; and for the rest I must trust to myself.'

'Is your lordship ready to read night-prayers?' a footman asked, opening the door. Catesby always did this when Father Stanhope was away, as he was now.

'Yes, you can have the bell rung,' Catesby answered. He laughed as the door closed. 'They will have to give up that—how surprised they will all be! In strict honesty I ought to tell them at once; but you must wait a little while to be "my lord." Now I'm going to night-prayers. Ah, Tristram, you don't know how hard that part has been! They have brought you up a Protestant, and this place has always been in Catholic hands.'

Tristram changed colour as he rose to follow Catesby.

'I told you in my letter I, too, had something to tell you; it has been on my lips a dozen times, and I have been shy of telling you. The priest at Harchester received me yesterday.'

Catesby turned abruptly.

'Tristram, you don't mean it! You never breathed any hint of this to me all these months. What brought the Church before you, living far away at St. Meloc's and then at Harchester.'

'Catesby, my dear boy, some things I heard of up at Harchester have helped it, and many things I have seen here myself. But it began with my birth. Look here.' And opening his collar and shirt, he took off the medal from his neck. 'That was found round my neck, and I have worn it always; and every night and morning I have prayed to the saints to pray for me. And they have been very good friends, and in their goodly company I hope to live and die; they first made me think of the Catholic religion, and brought me to inquire into it altogether.'

'And this is our last link in the chain, Tristram. The twin brothers each wore one like this; they were made of gold, and struck on purpose. This is not an authorized medal, but one struck out of the private devotion of our grandfather to the Holy Innocents and the Holy Family. See its fellow!' And from his own neck he drew the facsimile of the medal Tristram had worn all his life.

THE END.

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